

# HIGH-PAYING JOBS WITHOUT A COLLEGE DEGREE

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## ***One College Course + Work Experience = \$25,000/year? Impossible? \****

*\*One college course in A+ certification (computer repair) may lead to a \$25,000 job if the job hunter has work experience fixing computers.*

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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***Can I get a high-paying job with only one year of college?***

Yes. One of my college students recently asked, "Which short-term programs lead to jobs paying \$15-20/hour?" As a single mother with two children, she needed a good income to cover \$600/month day care expenses and mentioned interests in business and accounting. I asked if she would consider a career in computers. Like most of my college students, she was unaware of opportunities in the information technology (computer) field. I suggested several short-term programs that lead to \$30,000 entry-level positions: e-commerce, webmaster certification, and web page design.

### ***Does higher education always mean higher earnings?***

No. In 1992, an individual with a doctorate earned an average of \$54,904/year or an average of \$2,142,000 over a lifetime of work (estimated from ages 25 to 64). In 1992, a high school graduate earned an average of only \$18,737/year or an average of \$821,000 over a lifetime. (Bureau of Census, "More Education Means Higher Career Earnings") However by 2000, the information technology industry has challenged the assumption that more education equals higher pay. A high school graduate with extensive computer training and experience often earns as much as a college graduate in a liberal arts field.

### ***Why does the information technology industry pay high wages?***

Demand. "There are more than a million good reasons to consider a career in the Information Technology (IT) industry today. That's because employers will create a demand in this country for roughly 1.6 million IT workers this year. With demand for appropriately skilled people far exceeding supply, half of these positions – 843,328 – will likely go unfilled." (ITAA, "Executive Summary – Bridging the Gap: Information Technology Skills for a New Millennium")

### ***What if I hated my high school programming class?***

Becoming a programmer is not the only career option in computers; in fact, new IT job titles are created each year. Computer support and desktop publishing specialists are two entry-level non-programming occupations in great demand. In defense of programming as an occupation, the newest Internet programming languages (object-oriented languages) like Java or C++ are much easier to learn and use than the old computer languages (like Cobol or Fortran).

### ***How much do IT workers make?***

In Utah, an entry-level worker in computer support earns about \$20,000 to \$25,000, depending upon education and experience. A few "hot" job titles (with national median pay) include Webmaster (\$43,000/year), Senior Engineer (\$69,000/year), Java Programmer (\$70,000/year), Project Manager (\$71,000/year), and Chief Information Officer - CIO (\$100,000/year). (InformationWeek Research Salary Survey, 1999) The Internet has opened positions in "dot.com companies" that offer higher salaries and more flexibility than non-Internet companies. (InfoWorld, June 26, 2000, Vol. 22, Issue 26) Internet managers "enjoy a healthy median annual salary of \$70,000." (Mateyaschuk, 1999 National IT Salary Survey).

### ***What are the fastest-growing occupations today?***

"Five jobs projected to have the largest percentage increase from 1998 to 2008 include Computer Engineers (108%), Computer Support Specialists (102%), Systems Analysts (94%), Database Administrators (77%), and Desktop Publishing Specialists (73%)." (Bureau of Labor Statistics, USA Today, January 31, 2000)

### ***Is education (or certification) the best preparation for an IT career?***

Armed with an associate degree in computer science, a CNE (Certified Novell Engineer), or an MCSE (Microsoft Certified Software Engineer), many job hunters cannot find computer positions. One recruiter for an entry-level help desk position explained that employers want candidates with work experience.

### ***Is it possible to pursue on-the-job training?***

If your employer is hiring an entry-level computer operator and you have computer skills, you may be able to arrange an intern position. A young college student once stated that she loved her part-time job as a chat room supervisor yet had no formal computer training. She learned HTML (an Internet programming language) on her job and was offered another computer job based solely on her work experience.

### ***Can an artistic (or non-scientific) person enjoy a computer job?***

Don't allow old stereotypes of a computer programmer to scare you away from the IT field. The old image of an introverted, Spock-type person sitting behind a computer all day isn't typical of most information technology workers today. An artistic person may find interesting jobs like multimedia designer or computer graphics specialist.

### ***Can I make a career change to the IT field?***

Students with English, auto mechanics, business, or other backgrounds are often able to make a career change to the IT industry. If you are a writer and have a fairly advanced understanding of computers, you may find a technical writer position stimulating as you work with programmers and developers. If you are skilled in fixing machines as well as customer service, you may enjoy computer support. Many sales and business-oriented individuals find e-commerce exciting. Telecommunications is a related field. To find out more about today's fastest growing industries, research careers at a library, on the Internet, or at a college Career Information Center.

## **25 Careers in 8 Computer Fields**

### ***MULTIMEDIA AND GRAPHICS***

- Multimedia Designer
- Computer Graphics Specialist
- Graphics Designer
- Business Desktop Publisher
- Drafting/Computer-Aided Drafting

### ***E-BUSINESS, INTERNET, AND WEBMASTER***

- Distance Educator
- E-Commerce Designer
- Webmaster
- E-Business Technology Professional
- Telecommunications Administrator

### ***ENGINEERING, NETWORKING, AND DESIGNING***

- Engineering Designer
- Electronic Engineering Technician
- Computer Scientist/Network Engineer
- Systems Engineer
- CNE (Certified Novell Engineer)
- MCSE (Microsoft Certified Software Engineer)
- Cisco Administrator
- Technical Writer

### ***PROGRAMMING***

- Programmers, Systems Analysts
- (For specific programming languages, check catalogs)

### ***AUTOMATED MANUFACTURING***

- Computerized Machine Technician
- CNC Machinist
- Manufacturing Technician
- (CNC, Robotics, Quality Assurance)

### ***SUPPORT/HELP DESK***

- Support/Help Desk Specialist

### ***REPAIR***

- Computer Technician
- Electronic Equipment/System Repairer
- Telecommunications Cable Installer